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SUBJECT: POLITICIAN USING TRAFFIC INCIDENT AS POLITICAL STEPPING
STONE

REF: A. A. MOSCOW 635

[1](#)B. B. VLADIVOSTOK 016

Summary

[1](#)1. About a dozen demonstrators from Molodaya Gvardia -- the youth wing of Yedinaya Rossiya (YR) -- picketed in front of Congen Vladivostok October 27 to mark the tenth anniversary of the traffic incident that left Vladivostok resident Aleksandr Kashin paralyzed from the chest down (reftel A). Traffic Police and militia officers greatly outnumbered the picketers, who were joined by about fifteen members of the local press. The demonstration was led by YR member Maksim Glushkov, who has used this and other protests as a platform for greater political exposure.

Not Enough Picketers to Hold All the Props

[1](#)2. On October 27, about a dozen demonstrators from Yedinaya Rossiya's youth wing Molodaya Gvardia picketed in front of Congen Vladivostok to mark the tenth anniversary of the "Kashin-Kent" traffic incident. Notably absent was Aleksandr Kashin himself, the Vladivostok resident who was paralyzed from the chest down in a traffic accident involving then Consul General in Vladivostok Douglas Kent, but refused a USD 100,000 settlement (reftel B). Traffic police, militia officers, and reporters greatly outnumbered the picketers. The demonstration was led by Maksim Glushkov, an ambitious, though minor, local YR member who has a history of using such demonstrations to garner press coverage and to increase his political profile.

[1](#)3. Participants held posters saying "Ten years. No result," "Douglas Kent! Happy Anniversary" and "Justice: not for Russians?" In addition to the signs, demonstrators brought Russian national flags and Molodaya Gvardia banners, though there were not enough participants on hand to hold all the props. The group remained in front of the Consulate for about 30 minutes. Though press reports prior to the demonstration initially indicated that the group planned to submit a letter of complaint to the Consulate, no such missive was delivered.

[1](#)4. This was the first picket related to the Kashin incident since March, despite the promise Glushkov made then to hold demonstrations every month. The event did garner local press coverage, and Glushkov was observed giving interviews to each of the three video crews on the scene.

Traffic Accident as Political Stepping Stone

[1](#)5. (SBU) The event's organizer was Maksim Glushkov, a twenty-eight year old lawyer and leader of the regional chapter of Yedinaya Rossiya's youth wing Molodaya Gvardiya. Glushkov spoke candidly to a Congen Economic FSN several months prior to the demonstration about his political plans. He left the impression of an ambitious politician with national career

goals, who, though not in support of many of YR's policies, will use his association with the organization as a platform to greater prominence.

¶6. He has facilitated a number of Molodaya Gvardiya demonstrations, including the public destruction of Estonian canned fish to protest Tallinn's decision last year to relocate the city's Monument to WWII Soldiers. He has also arranged various public service activities for Molodaya Gvardia members to clean streets and parks and YR election campaign drives.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) Glushkov's group of "protesters" consists of a coterie of about ten Molodaya Gvardiya university students who generally participate in all of his pet projects. More like employees than volunteers, they are usually paid 300 to 500 rubles (USD 12 to 20) for their participation. It is unlikely Molodaya Gvardiya's assertion that their Primorye branch has a large membership base is true, since university students in the region are generally politically apathetic. Glushkov is clearly using the Kashin incident for his own political benefit. The general population does not appear to support his cause, and in fact most Vladivostok residents feel that Kashin made a mistake not accepting the USD 100,000 settlement.

GERSTEN